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360Zine

Issue 12 | November 2007

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008

It's a spandex spectacular!

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COMPO INSIDE...



REVIEWED

PES 2008

The beautiful game on 360

REVIEWED
THE ORANGE BOX
VIRTUA FIGHTER 5
PROJECT GOTHAM 4



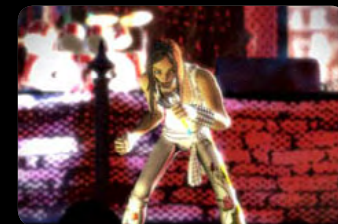
PREVIEWS!



1 ARMY OF TWO
Lock and load



2 ACE COMBAT 6
Take to the skies



3 ROCK BAND
Strut your stuff

PLUS LOADS MORE!



Welcome to 360Zine



Another bumper issue this month with a stack of Triple-A titles lining up for your hard earned cash. Whatever your genre of choice there's sure to be a game within these digital pages that makes its way on to your 360 over the coming weeks.

My personal game of choice this month has to be PES 2008, although having been taken to the cleaners by my 8-year old son took the shine off somewhat. With him safely tucked up in bed Orange Box has also enjoyed a lot of play time in the Hutchinson household.

Elsewhere we have WWE SmackDown vs RAW, PGR4, Virtua Fighter 5 and Dynasty Warriors: Gundam all up for review. Like I said - something for everyone!
Enjoy the issue...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



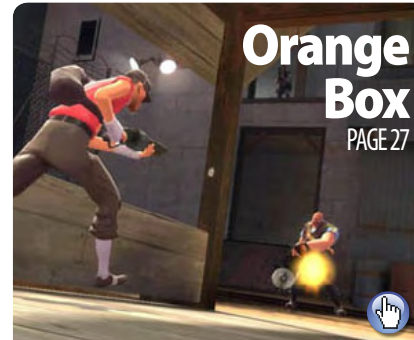
**WWE SmackDown!
vs RAW 2008**
READY TO RUMBLE
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PGR4
Two wheels good?
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PES 2008
NEXT-GEN FOOTIE
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**Orange
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Strictly hardcore
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QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

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Ace Combat 6

Sega Superstars Tennis

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PES 2008

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Virtua Fighter 5

Project Gotham Racing 4

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam

XBLA

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Steve Hill

Steve plays PES. A lot. See what he makes of the latest iteration.



Richard Melville

Richard was hoping to bring us CoD 4, but it wasn't to be. Make sure you check the review next issue...



Ian Morris

See what Ian makes of the latest and greatest additions to Xbox Live Arcade.



Chris Schilling

Chris has been a busy boy month, but he's mostly been playing Orange Box.

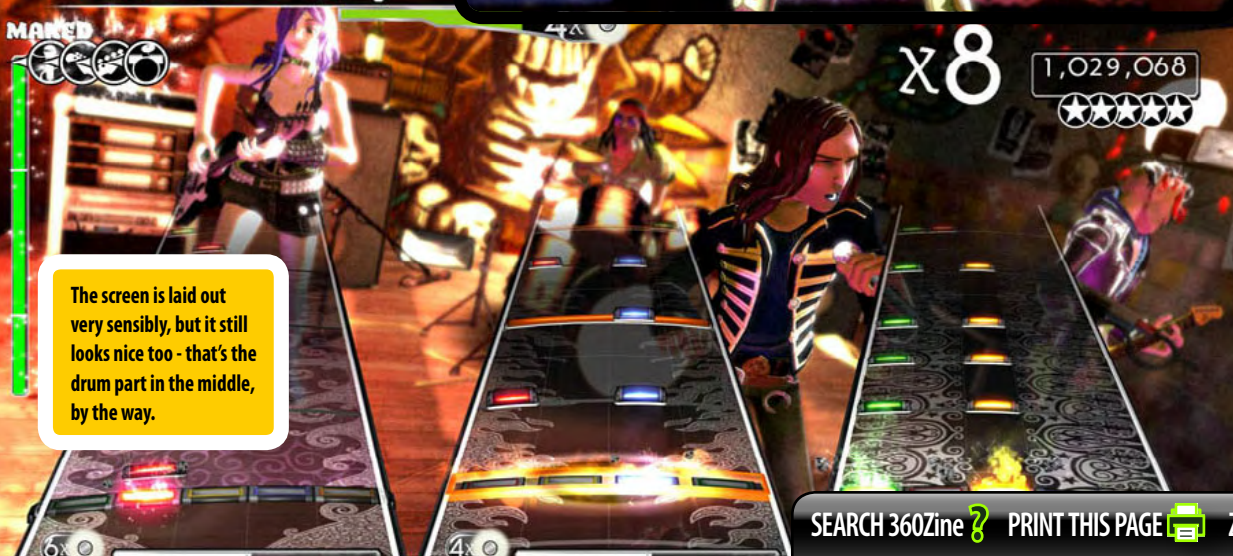
ROCKBAND

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Harmonix
Heritage: Frequency, Amplitude, Guitar Hero
Link: www.rockband.com/
ETA: February 2008



Creating an online band and playing songs together over Live is an amazing thought. The fact that it's a possibility so soon is remarkable.

"Rock Band could be the ultimate multiplayer experience"



The screen is laid out very sensibly, but it still looks nice too - that's the drum part in the middle, by the way.

FIRST LOOK

Rock Band

Harmonix, we salute you

What's the story?

The Guitar Hero creator split from Activision before the third game in the series and signed a multi-million dollar deal with MTV Games to publish this multi-instrument full group version overseas in November. EA has the UK rights, and we should be seeing this around February time.

What do we know?

That it's potentially the most awesome rhythm-action game ever made, really. Many believed that Harmonix was taking too much on with this - they'd mastered one instrument, but the tricky prospect of producing a game that would essentially let you form your own virtual band was surely a step too far? Not a bit of it. The vocals work as well as any SingStar game, drums are more fun than is entirely healthy, and it goes without saying that the fretmashing guitar parts are bang on the money. With a bucketload of licensed tracks to play along to, Rock Band could be the ultimate multiplayer experience. Expensive, though. Expect a pricetag of over £100 here for the game plus all the necessary peripherals.

When do we get more?

We'll be giving the finished US version the once-over in a month or so - so a full hands-on preview could well be in the offing.

Anything else to declare?

The downloadable content planned is staggering - Harmonix plans to regularly release full downloadable albums over Live. One of the first will be Nirvana's Nevermind. Sweet.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Rock Band!



The drumkit peripheral is remarkably sturdy - and, for our money, even more fun to play than the guitar.

MASTER TIME TO
BECOME THE ULTIMATE WEAPON



5/5
MAXIM

TIMESHIFT

SLOW, STOP, AND REVERSE TIME.

COMING 2ND NOVEMBER



COMING SOON TO
PLAYSTATION 3

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ACE COMBAT 6 Fires of Liberation

Publisher: Atari

Developer: Namco-Bandai Games

Heritage: Tekken: Dark Resurrection, Ridge Racer 7

Link: www.acecombatsix.com

ETA: 23rd November

There are some incredible (if vertigo-inducing) cockpit views. It's a little easier to play with the external camera, though.

There's a lot to keep track of in the busy skies - it's a tough old game and no mistake.



When we used to play Afterburner in the arcades, this was how we imagined it'd look one day. A childhood dream realised.

"A stunningly gorgeous flight combat game"



FIRST LOOK

Ace Combat 6: Fires of Liberation

Fly, my pretty, fly

What's the story?

The AC6 demo on Xbox Live Marketplace got its one millionth download just a couple of weeks ago. It's a stunningly gorgeous flight combat game with a less daunting feel than your average sim. It's also bloody good fun. We can see why it's been so popular, that's for sure.

What do we know?

There's a thrillingly cinematic single-player campaign to tackle, complete with detailed, fully acted story sequences to provide a bit of Top Gun-esque drama to the soaring-and-shooting action. The battlefields you're entering change dynamically throughout, with the associated missions varying as you progress. The game contains several licensed aircraft which you can command and later upgrade to kit yourself out with the most powerful air weaponry available. But the thing which gets us most excited is the promise of full online multiplayer dogfights. Particularly given that the game allows up to sixteen players to take to the skies.

When do we get more?

Fires of Liberation is due to hit shop shelves on the 23rd of this month. We'll bring you the 360Zine verdict in our very next issue!

Anything else to declare?

If you'd rather be playing wingman than trying to shoot your buddies down, then there's a few co-operative game types for you to try.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of Ace Combat 6!



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Jump in.





Publisher: Sega

Developer: Sumo Digital

Heritage: OutRun 2,
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

Link: www.sega-europe.com

ETA: Early 2008



The Samba de Amigo court is a particular visual highlight - several Sega characters will be spectating as well as taking part.

Virtua Tennis 3 was always more on the arcade side of the fence, and we expect this to play very similarly.

The Green Hill Zone makes for a lush backdrop to the on-court action. Blue sky gaming returns!

"There's an impressive roster of popular Sega characters to play as"



FIRST LOOK

Sega Superstars Tennis

Sega serves up a super-Sonic smash

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of Sega Superstars!

What's the story?

If you've always felt that normal tennis games are a bit too po-faced and serious, then this latest from Sega should do you very nicely indeed. Developers Sumo Digital have been given access to Sega IP from several games, and so there's an impressive roster of popular Sega characters to play as.

What do we know?

It's looking very much like Virtua Tennis 3, only with the likes of Sonic and Super Monkey Ball's AI battling it out on court. With fifteen characters promised, you'll see Space Channel 5's Ulala smashing winners past Amigo from maraca-shaking rhythm-actioner Samba de Amigo. We

only hope that the rest of the characters aren't just Sonic's no-mark mates but protagonists from some of Sega's classic titles. It's important that the special powers included don't unbalance the game, but with the excellent Sumo Digital at the helm, the franchise appears to be in safe hands. The courts are a little more colourful than your average sim, though as in real life, each surface will play very differently.

When do we get more?

With a bit of luck we'll be getting our hands on this in the early months of next year, so expect more impressions then. A demo surely isn't out of the question either.

Anything else to declare?

As well as the Exhibition and Tournament modes, the 360 game will allow online matches.



TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND

Coming November 2nd

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In Tony Hawk's Proving Ground you choose the skills to learn, the skate style you'll show, and how your story unfolds. Go effortlessly from single player to online multiplayer as you turn the whole world into your own personal skatepark. With the full-feature editor, you can record and edit videos of your greatest, most amazing moves in all their epic glory.



Will you try to invent a new trick or make your rep as a skatepark designer



Use the full-feature video editor to truly tell your story



Pick the skate moves you want to master to show your own style



PLAYSTATION 3



NINTENDO DS

Wii

ACTIVISION

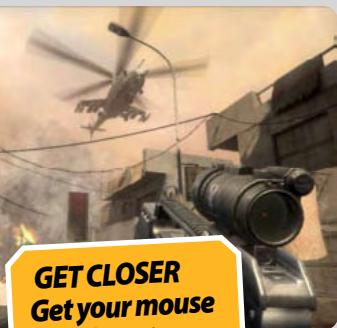
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INCOMING

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Soldier of Fortune: Payback

Publisher: Activision | **ETA:** Late November

Already banned in Australia, Activision's ultra-violent FPS is due to hit shelves late this month, assuming the BBFC doesn't step in and 'do a Manhunt 2'. Playing as the rather wimpily named Thomas Mason, you're a freelance mercenary caught in a war with extremists who'll stop at nothing to eliminate you. Nasty.



Lost: The Videogame

Publisher: Ubisoft | **ETA:** 2008

Not an awful lot is known about Ubisoft's game-of-the-TV-show, but the official trailer has us almost as excited as we would be if they were making a Heroes game (surely, someone?) With puzzle, action and stealth elements, this looks to have captured the atmosphere of the show. Fingers crossed the gameplay matches up.



Lost Odyssey

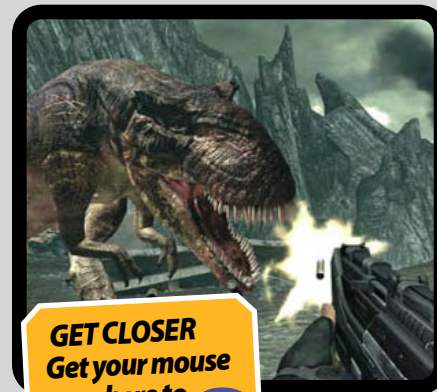
Publisher - Microsoft | **ETA -** Spring 2008

The latest epic J-RPG from Blue Dragon studio Mistwalker is said to have over twenty hours of cutscenes. Coming from legendary designer Hironobu Sakaguchi (creator of the Final Fantasy series) hopes are high that this can raise the 360's profile in Japan, and it should be a treat for genre lovers when it arrives here next year.

Turok

Publisher: Touchstone | **ETA:** February 2008

After a lengthy hiatus, the dinosaur-blasting franchise returns with a wealth of Hollywood talent (Deadwood's Timothy Olyphant, Prison Break's William Fichtner, 24's Powers Boothe) on vocal duties. It looks very tasty indeed, so hopes are high this can turn the series round.



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FEAR Files

Publisher - Sierra | **ETA -** Late November

The original FPS-cum-scarefest had some of the best combat in the genre, and this new title which features PC expansion pack Extraction Point plus a whole new campaign to tide fans over until sequel Project Origin. With six new weapons and even more destructible environments, the slo-mo sequences should be even more spectacular.



UPCOMING

AUTUMN 2007

- Final Fantasy XI: Wings of the Goddess
- The Golden Compass
- Frontlines: Fuel Of War

WINTER 2007

- Battlefield: Bad Company
- Talisman

SPRING 2008

- Devil May Cry 4
- Condemned 2: Bloodshot

SUMMER 2008

- Conflict: Denied Ops
- To End All Wars

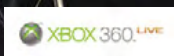
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PLAYSTATION 3



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Publisher: Microsoft

Developer: Krome Studios

Heritage: Ty The Tasmanian

Tiger series, The Legend of

Spyro: A New Beginning

Link: www.vivapinata.

com/default.htm

ETA: Christmas

Viva Pinata: Party Animals

A bit of animal magnetism for the casual gamer

The Xbox 360 is a very successful games console - it's neck-and-neck with the phenomenon that is Nintendo's Wii in hardware sales, and streets ahead in terms of software. With Halo 3 selling well in excess of three million copies in just a week on sale in the US, MS is surely satisfied at the progress it has made this console generation.

Yet, as those hardware figures prove, a console that's been on the market for a year less is shifting as many units. Nintendo has firmly grasped the need to appeal outside the traditional gamer demographic.

There's no doubting that the casual and non-gamer market has clasped Wii to its bosom - and Microsoft can only look on enviously. This year, the company has decided to do

"Conceptually, it's fairly similar to Nintendo's hugely popular Mario Party series"



Franklin Fizzlybear is our favourite character, with his laid-back surfer dude attitude. 'Gnarly!'

something about that - Christmas sees the release of a videogame version of popular movie quiz boardgame Scene It, but the game which should appeal to both enthusiasts and less regular players is the one you see here.

The original Pinata was a critical smash - its relaxing gameplay and fabulous graphics made it a hit with reviewers, though its commercial showing was moderate at best. Somehow it didn't quite appeal as

The pinatas come in male and female varieties, so your sister or mother won't feel left out.



much to the casual gamer as MS had predicted. From our playtest of Party Animals, we get the feeling that this time, the Viva Pinata brand will finally have the success it deserves.

Conceptually, it's fairly similar to Nintendo's hugely popular Mario Party series. In the execution, it's quite different - a relief to those who've ➤





**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
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you think of
Viva Pinata!

>Viva Pinata continued

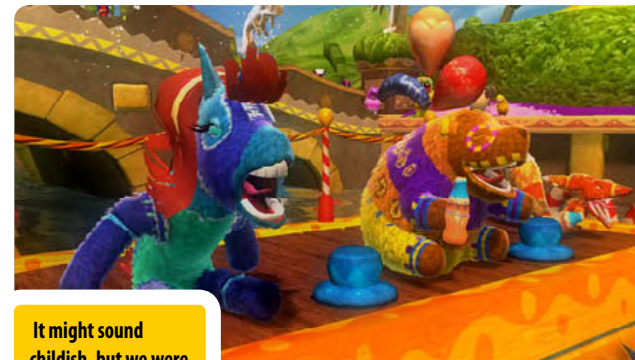
endured Mario Party 8. For starters, there's no board game format. Instead, before you get to the minigames you've got race stages, which are genuinely entertaining. As these games tend to go, that's doubly so if there's a group of you. Controls are relatively simple - use the right trigger to accelerate, left to brake (though you'll never need it), A to jump and X to use power-ups, with Y used to swap between the two you're able to hold. Tracks aren't amazingly exciting in terms of layout, though there are

"Krome Studios has kept the control schemes very simple"



This task has you ground-pounding raisants to get the most candy. It's one of the better challenges we played.

shortcuts to exploit. The power-ups are either offensive items (honey to make your opponents slip, rockets to blast them if you're trailing) or ones which affect your own progress (butterfly wings, or fizzy drinks which give you a short burst of speed). These tend to make the races fairly tight affairs, which leads to some exciting finishes.



It might sound childish, but we were highly amused by all the burping that goes on. This belching minigame is a hoot.

It's important to win the races as they affect the number of bonus points you get in the minigames thereafter. You can choose from short, medium or long games, which varies the total number of races and the volume of minigames or 'challenge events' inbetween. Sensibly, Krome Studios has

kept the control schemes very simple indeed - mostly requiring just the left stick and the A button, with a few adding B for good measure. One or two - like a test of timing which has you pressing buttons to tickle the pinatas - use just the four face buttons.

As is the case with most party-style games, the tasks are a bit of a mixed bag, with some genuinely amusing and competitive pursuits followed by weak, frustrating duds. Still, you're never too far from the fun race stages, so the majority of your time with Party Animals will be hugely enjoyable. If MS can find the right balance, then this could be a fine bit of festive family fun - grab your controllers and settle down with some turkey butties and enjoy a great little post-dinner party game. ●

Ruffians cheer you on in the races, but you can also control them in certain minigames.

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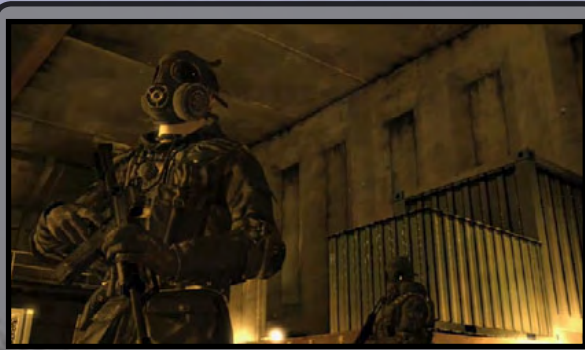
HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

80%

Top Christmas action with friends and family



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Publisher: EA Games
Developer: EA Montreal
Heritage: SSX On Tour
Link: www.ea.com/armyoftwo/index.jsp
ETA: 30th November

Army Of Two

EA is going down the co-op

Big, burly soldiers. Enormous guns spewing bullets twenty to the dozen. A global conflict, and a world-threatening conspiracy. Army of Two certainly doesn't sound like one of the most imaginative and innovative games of the year, does it? But EA Montreal hasn't let its somewhat hackneyed template affect the genuinely original gameplay - playing Army of Two is an experience quite unlike any other in videogaming.

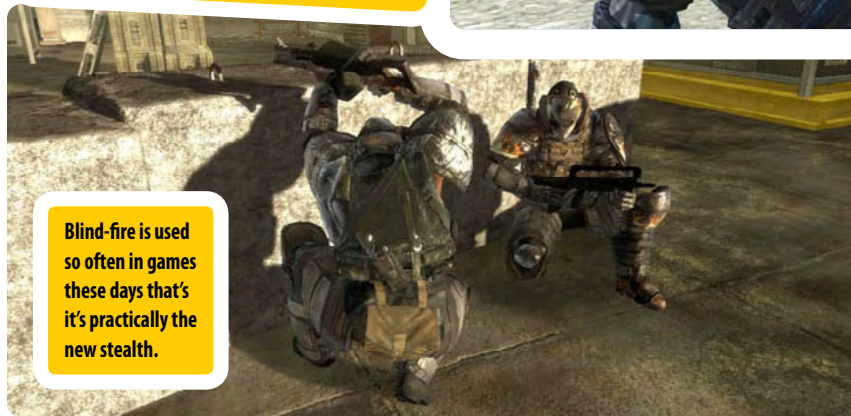
Take one glance at the screenshots and you could be forgiven for thinking

When one man goes down, the other has to heal him while the stricken player has to run away from the light. Nice touch.

"Playing Army of Two is an experience quite unlike any other in videogaming"

Blind-fire is used so often in games these days that's it's practically the new stealth.

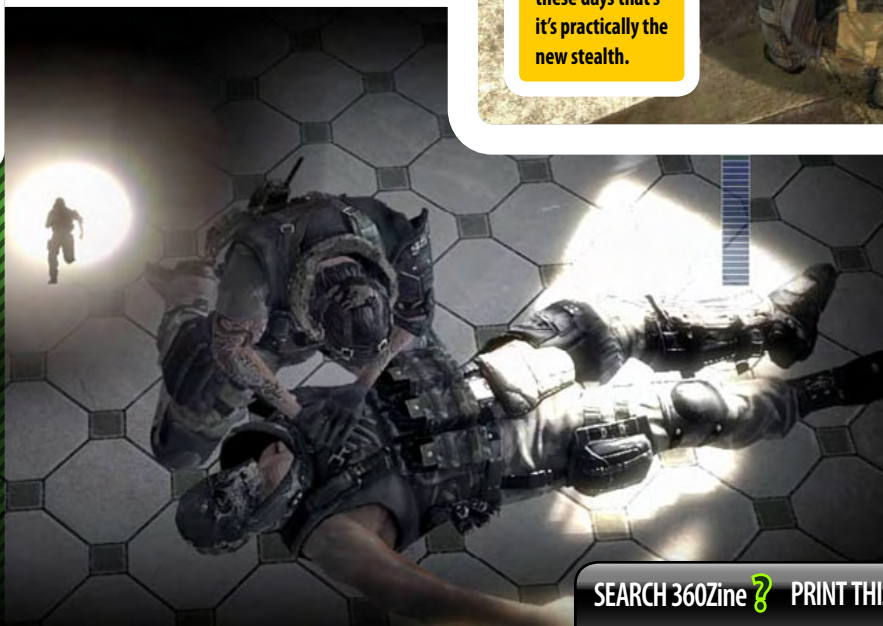
Yes, it really does look this good. EA Montreal have worked wonders with the 360 - especially as it moves so smoothly.



The key to progression in the game is to play co-operatively, taking control of characters Rios and Salem as they fulfil their missions for various politically-motivated Private Military Contractors. This can be done in split-screen or online multiplayer, or by utilising the Partner Artificial Intelligence in solo mode. EA Montreal has spent a great deal of time on this aspect of the game, and from what we've seen, they've done a terrific job. It'll be crucial to the single-player that the illusion of playing with a human player is maintained throughout - we'll be sure to report whether or not it does in our review next issue.

But Army of Two is clearly a game intended to be played with a partner - either online or off. The splitscreen multiplayer works very well - it's nice to discuss tactics in person, and the game includes 'emotes' which can allow you the amusing indulgence of you ➤

Epic and CliffyB should be contacting their lawyers right about now - such is the game's visual similarity to Gears of War in co-operative mode. But while the Unreal 3 engine is clearly evident from these pics, you're in for quite a surprise when it comes to getting your hands on the controller. And besides, some people will be rather pleased about the comparison - Gears remains one of the 360's premier titles, and this is one hell of a looker on its own terms.

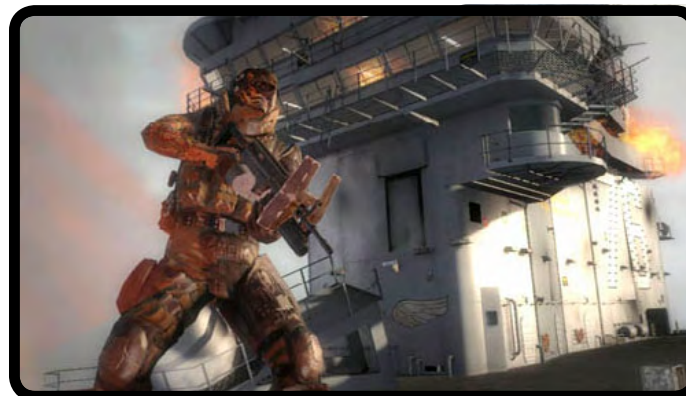




>Army of Two continued

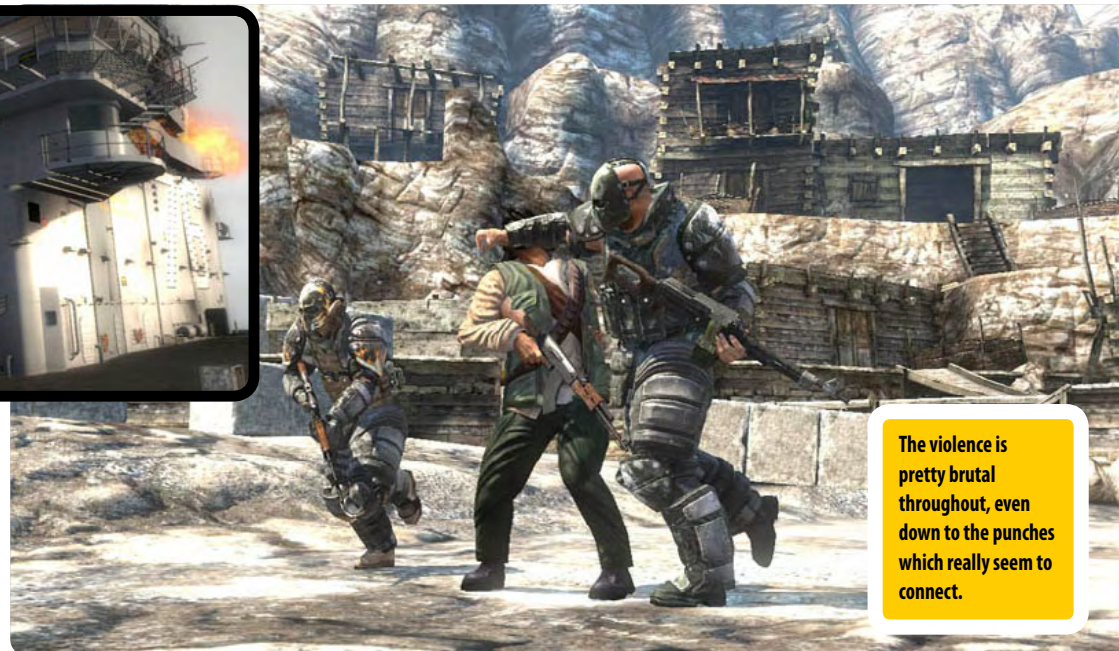
both playing air guitar, Bill and Ted style, when you combine well. Yet to get the very best out of the game, we'd recommend playing it online - not only is talking over the headset somehow more realistic than having your compadre on the sofa next to you, but the other online mode allows for two armies of two - competing to gain ground, or to capture or kill terrorists against another team is a thrilling experience quite different from any other online game we've played.

While the main characters seem a little too gung-ho and unstoppable to be true, the game's realism in other



areas is admirable. EA Montreal has had input from an ex-Navy SEAL which adds to the authenticity, while the weapon customisation feature is an important part of balancing your team's capabilities.

The other most notable feature -



The violence is pretty brutal throughout, even down to the punches which really seem to connect.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of Army of Two!



While the action gets explosive at times, it's unwise to be too openly hostile. It's best to play the game more tactically.

and the one which has the biggest impact on how the game plays - is the so-called Aggrometer. Such factors as the number of shots fired, or more ostentatious weaponry (hello, gold-plated pistols) affect who has the most Aggro. Once a player's Aggro reaches a certain level, he'll glow red, which will attract the attention of enemies, who will concentrate their fire on him. This allows his near-invisible compatriot to sneak round and take out an enemy from behind, or to reach a previously-guarded area. It's an unusual addition which creates some incredibly intense

and satisfying moments - one clever tactic is to increase the Aggro of the stealthy player to draw fire from your bullet-magnet partner.

While its story isn't quite as compelling as fellow double-header Kane & Lynch, Army of Two is a lot more polished - and the fact that its co-operative mode is online-enabled puts it one step ahead of Eidos' effort. Whether the game can maintain the quality we've seen throughout remains to be seen, but we're optimistic that Army of Two could be one of the best original games this Winter. ●

360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

89%

Two heads are better than one. Start getting excited.

ARMY OF TWO

After getting a look at EA's cracking online shooter, we spoke to EA Montreal's Army Of One - Senior Producer Reid Schneider, to get his thoughts on the game.



Reid Schneider - Senior Producer, EA Montreal

Reid Schneider joined EA in 2004, from Ubisoft Montreal. He seems to be a Batman fan, having not only worked on several games featuring the Caped Crusader for his old company, but also on 2005's Batman Begins at EA. He also helped produce Battlefield Vietnam.



It's not all killing bad guys - there are rescue missions thrown in for good measure, too.

The game is really tailored for two-man co-operative play - how did you ensure Army of Two plays an equally enjoyable experience for the lone player?

For us it was about creating a Partner AI that had the feel of a human player. Rather than a squad-based shooter where you tell your team where to go, we have a system where you tell your AI Partner to advance, hold position, or regroup and defend you. You can also tell him to build aggro (generate a distraction) or not build aggro (no distraction). This allows you to create some cool strategies when encountering tough enemy AI.

Presumably one of the most intensive tasks during development was getting the partner AI to behave like a fellow



There are a number of melee moves to supplement the gunplay. It's hugely satisfying to clothesline a nearby enemy.

human player would in the single-player mode?

Absolutely, we spent /a lot/ of time working on this. We iterated to get this right. We needed to find the right balance of him taking out all enemies too fast vs. dying quickly. It's a tough balance but I believe in the end we nailed it. Also, there is the constant focus of making sure the Partner AI

never does anything that makes him look less intelligent. If he does even something small that looks strange it breaks the illusion.

Aside from the artificial intelligence, what does Army of Two do that couldn't be done on last-gen machines?

The co-op moves were something



The nature of the level design is such that you're forced to split up on occasion, which can leave you feeling hugely vulnerable.

> Interview continued

that could not be done on last-gen machines. We needed to have perfect synchronization of the animation across the network, while maintaining the rest of the game simulation. This was something that required next-gen hardware to produce. We're really excited that people will be able to try out these cool new tactics we spent a lot of time creating.

It's a very action-oriented game, yet there's a definite strategic side to proceedings. Will we see moments in the game that require a lot of forward planning and team discussion?

You /need/ to be strategic with your partner when dealing with tough enemies. You can't go into a map guns

Many missions require one player to protect the other from attack by providing covering fire.

blazing and expect to survive. You really need to work together as a two-man unit to win. This is the core of the game, it's all about co-op.

Can you tell us more about the weapon customisation feature?

The weapon customization feature is a

very deep part of AO2. Basically you have contacts across the globe who will sell you different types of arms; Machine Guns, Handguns, Sniper Rifles... you can then customize the barrel, scope, stock and even put a grenade launcher or shotgun front-mount on these guns. Finally you can pimp out your weapons and make them gold/silver plated. All these attachments, and even skins, have an effect on the weapon's performance in the game. None of it is just for show.

The game has a range of 'emotes' that can be performed - are these

Two-player forklift action just makes us think back to Shenmue. Sadly there aren't any sailors to be found here.



While Salem and Rios are buddies, they engage in a fair bit of trash-talking throughout.

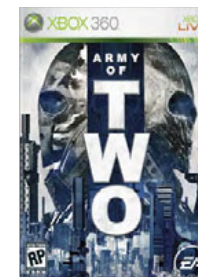
"We're really excited that people will be able to try out these cool new tactics"

just for fun, or do they add to the gameplay in any way?

Yes, these are just for fun but they help reinforce the buddy-cop nature of the title. That being said if you shoot your partner AI too many times you may find him trying to kick you rather than fight. Net result: don't piss off your partner (laughs).

Finally, which single aspect of the game are you most proud of?

I'm really proud of what the team was able to accomplish with the title as a cohesive package. They deserve all the credit for solidifying the ideas and building it into a great game. The team had a "refuse to fail" mentality and did a great job innovating. I also think our AI is some of the strongest in any title. They feel smart and will not go down easily. ●



Developer: Swordfish Studios

Publisher: Take 2

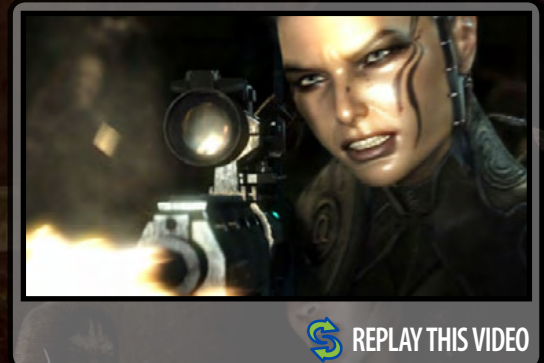
Players: 1-8

Features: Huge destructible environments, class-based battling, action-RTS hybrid gameplay.

Heritage: Cold Winter, a whole team of sports games.

ETA: November 11

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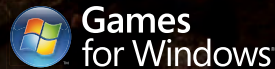


"JERICHO IS A BLOODBATH OF PALLID FLESH
AND TORN STITCHES"

360

OUT NOW

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WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/JERICHO



PLAYSTATION 3



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WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2008

Developer: Yuke's

Publisher: THQ

Heritage: WWE

SmackDown series, Rumble

Roses

Link: www.

SmackDownvsraw.com

ETA: 9th November

Grappling hooked - THQ's wrestler is pure fan-service

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw is a series that's been taking baby steps forward every year. In many ways it's the FIFA of wrestling games - it gets a lot of the incidental stuff right, but fails when it comes down to the core gameplay. Yet, like FIFA this year, SvR has seen a number of significant improvements that, while failing to fix several of the series' problems, alleviates quite a few other niggles to provide probably the most comprehensive recreation of the sport on console.

The big addition this year is new Superstar Fighting Styles - each wrestler has a different approach, from the High Flyers like the acrobatic Rey



The crowd is one of the best we've seen in a game, though they spend more time holding banners than doing any shouting.

Mysterio to Power House behemoths like Bobby Lashley and Kane. There's certainly more of a noticeable difference to controlling these different characters this time round, and each has his own special moves. One particularly wince-inducing moment came when Randy Orton punched our wrestler between the legs - then, as we started to turn the tide of the match, he used the ref as a shield, so he could recover, spoiling our momentum.

Another extra is the Struggle Submission System - floor your opponent and sit on his back and you can pull his arms up until he submits. If you're the one in control, it's a case of manoeuvring the right stick to keep a firm grip on your rival, while the wrestler on the receiving end has to do the same to kick out of the hold. Similarly, the right stick is used for various different Quick Grapple moves, while holding RB and the right stick

"The big addition this year is new Superstar Fighting Styles"

GRAB THE ADVANTAGE

Keeping a firm grip on things



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 1

The Guide To Good Grappling, Step One: first, distract your opponent by pointing out his mum in the crowd, then bounce his head off the turnbuckles to stun him. Once you've dropped him to the canvas, it's time for Step Two.



Bouts can occasionally drag on just a little bit too long, so it's as much relief as satisfaction that you feel when you finally win.

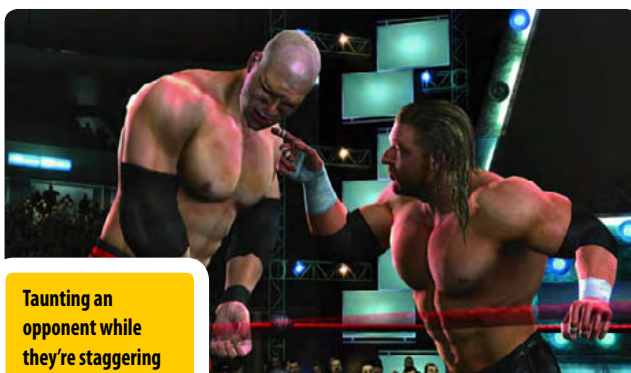
executes a Strong Grapple.

Other than that, and the increased roster from the added ECW stars, not a whole lot has changed. There's still a wealth of modes, and more options for >

> WWE continued

different matches than you could ever completely exhaust. Exhibitions can range from Royal Rumbles to the famous Hell In The Cell matches, you can create your own tournaments, customise your own wrestler's moves, and even adjust how often an opponent will pull off certain moves - handy if you've got one of the irritating types who manages to pull a reversal every time you close in for a grab.

The new 24-7 Superstar Mode is pretty engaging, with a different storyline for each wrestler, comprising



Taunting an opponent while they're staggering around is the ultimate way to gloat.

You can straddle your opponent by pressing A when you're standing over him, whereupon you can beat his face to a bloody pulp. Nice.

of events in and out of the ring. It's your responsibility to not only take care of your opponents, but to train yourself up to perform better, or even promote the WWE. You can choose to sign autographs on your day off to build up your support among the fans, or even appear in films to raise your profile and fatten your wallet - the money is used to purchase myriad unlockables, with the best of all being wrestling superstars of old, like Rowdy Roddy Piper and Brett 'Hitman' Hart. It's also fun to have the ability to interrupt other matches, rather than just simulating your results - and you might increase your popularity too. And you can take control of any match you fancy, if you're in the mood for a break from your own superstar - it's a great way to learn the controls for each character without it



affecting your own standing when you lose. Though the video tutorials also do a good job of showing how best to exploit your wrestler's fighting style.

In the ring

While it's nice to build a friendship with your tag team partner and enjoy a (sometimes surprisingly vicious) rivalry with one or two other wrestlers, the atmosphere is spoiled a little by the lack of voice acting. Your wrestler is strangely mute throughout - making



FREEZE FRAME

On the ropes



1 HOUR - Getting beaten in your early career hurts - though a loss doesn't mean game over.



3 HOURS - You'll be improving by this stage, but rival matches especially are tough to beat.



6 HOURS - Mixing it up a bit by watching and playing in other bouts.



8 HOURS - Starting to turn the tables... your opponents will soon be begging for mercy



12 HOURS PLUS - Champion, and WWE Superstar. You're on top of the world!

This is no time to relax on the job.



Cage matches, ladder matches... you name it, there's an option for it. And it's as easy to win a match through a ring out as by a pin.



> WWE continued

the over-the-top gesticulations look even more silly - and indeed your opponents keep their mouths shut outside the infrequent story cutscenes. Further problems - which really should have been ironed out by now - remain, like the incessant loading (it's never ruinously long, but still very frequent), and the graphical glitches. Character models impress for the most part, so it's doubly disappointing that there's noticeable clipping, disappearing limbs and so on. Strangely, outside the razzmatazz of the entrances, the atmosphere during the matches is fairly subdued - the crowd is pretty well-drawn and reasonably animated, but there's not too much cheering or booing.

On the canvas

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 definitely feels like a progression, though not as much as it could and should have been. Every time you're getting more immersed, there's always something small to shatter the illusion. But unless you're vehemently anti-wrestling, it's hard to see anyone not getting some enjoyment out of it. Solid but unspectacular then, but if you're the sort of gamer who knows Mr. Kennedy's movelist off by heart, then you're bound to have a ball. ●

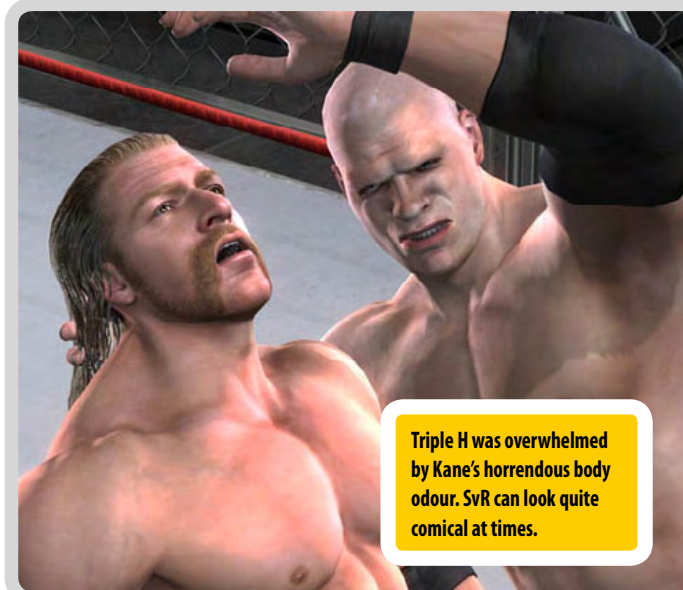
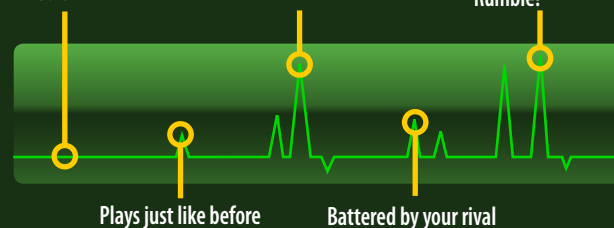
"Character models impress for the most part"

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Godawful menu music

24/7 mode is great fun

Can't beat a multiplayer Royal Rumble!



Triple H was overwhelmed by Kane's horrendous body odour. SvR can look quite comical at times.

360Zine Verdict *Close to greatness*

- Wrestlers look disturbingly realistic
- Less button-mashing than usual
- Graphical glitches, frequent loading

85%

A hero never dies



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Microsoft
game studios

BUNGIE

xbox.com/halo3

HALO 3

BELIEVE

26th September 2007

Jump in.





PES 2008

Here we go, here we go, again...

For so long inextricably associated with the PlayStation, it's hard to pinpoint the exact moment when Pro Evolution Soccer became an essential Xbox title. It might have started when Microsoft stuck their oar into various media events, swamping them with 360s and effectively purging the PS2 in a Stalinist revision of history.

Developer: Konami

Publisher: Konami

Heritage: PES 1-6

Link: www.pes2008.net

OUT NOW

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

The good, the bad and the ugly.



Dribble

Pull

Dive

Dribble

The trademark PES dribbling is intact, enabling you to drop the shoulder and leave a defender looking for his arse.



He's good, but do they really need the entire team in the wall?

"PES is the lovable and crucially, playable people's champion"

Naturally, everyone moaned about the 360 controller, but begrudgingly got on with it, conceding that the next-gen debut of PES was a promising start. A year down the line the 360 is graced with one of the console's best games of the year, knocking FIFA 08 into a cocked hat.

If you've no idea of the history of pretend football, FIFA is traditionally pitched as the evil corporate behemoth, while the plucky PES is the lovable – and crucially, playable – people's champion. The goalposts have shifted in recent years though, as in attempting to emulate each other, both commercially and critically, they have been in danger of disappearing up each other's six-yard box.

So while this year's FIFA on 360 is a staid midfield battle, PES 2008 is a

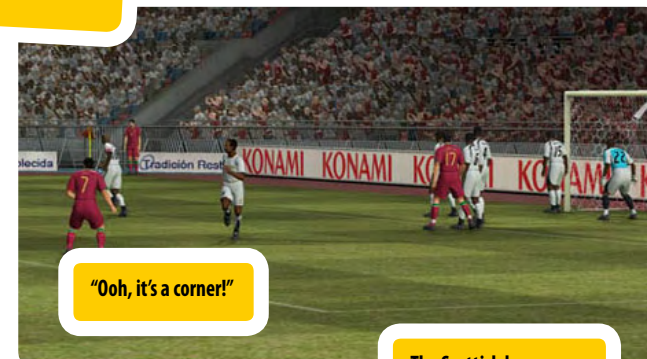
thrilling end-to-end encounter. Historically, goals have been hard to come by in PES, but this season they're flying in from all angles. And while it might seem hypocritical after years of praising the game's hardcore simulation values, it's a gamble that appears to have paid off, providing absorbing matches and thrilling action. There aren't many games that actually cause your jaw to drop, as frequently happens here in the midst of a frantic goalmouth scramble.

Goal feast

There may be more goals than in previous incarnations, but PES 2008 is still incredibly realistic, with players running just like their real life counterparts, and on-the-ball trickery that never stretches into the realms of ➤



Little Michael Owen, shortly before picking up another injury.



"Ooh, it's a corner!"

The Scottish keeper living up to the stereotype...





Panathinaikos versus IFK Goteborg, in case you were wondering.

"This year's big thing is the Teamvision system"

Blatant handball, surely.



The Spot-the-Ball competition received a record entry.

> PES 2008 continued

fantasy. This year's big thing is the so-called Teamvision system, whereby the AI apparently adapts to your style of play. So, in theory, if you keep attacking down the flanks you'll soon find a clutch of defenders waiting for you. In

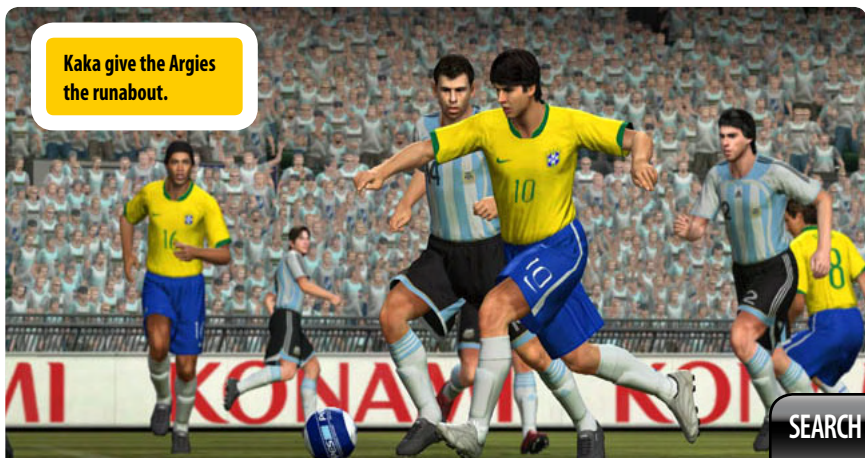
practice it's not immediately evident that any such tactical genius is at work, but you do have to mix up your play a bit in order to regularly strum the onion bag. Crucially, there are no obvious moves that work time and time again, and you genuinely have to adapt to your players, your formation, and of

course the opposition.

All good

Here's the obligatory bad news. As ever, EA have seemingly bought the entire world of football, leaving PES with little more than a few licensed morsels. While FIFA features the correct teams, names, stadia, kits, hairstyles and cock sizes; in PES the players are effectively turning out for Dog Shit FC while sporting the oversized shorts that you're forced to wear when you forget your PE kit. This is of course a massive exaggeration, but the problem is at its most acute in the 'Premier League,' where only the seemingly arbitrary brace of Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur are allowed to trade under their given names, the

Kaka give the Argies the runabout.



Back off from the likes of Didier and the ball will be in the back of the net quicktime.

How many defenders?

"Two-player PES is as good as games get"

> PES 2008 continued

rest labouring under such cockeyed monikers as North London and Manchester Red.

Live and kicking

There's no denying that everyone would prefer more authenticity, but in sheer videogame terms it's practically an irrelevance. Two-player PES is almost as good as games get, and with the advent of Xbox Live that (currently

occasionally jerky) option is at your fingertips 24 hours a day. As with last year, only friendly or ranked matches are available, but there is a new addition in the form of a selection of amusingly innocent instant text messages that you can send to your opponents during a game, including such nuggets as: "I stuffed that up," "You are a good player," or simply "Hahahahaha!"

For the solo player, PES is still a perfectly appropriate solitary pursuit,

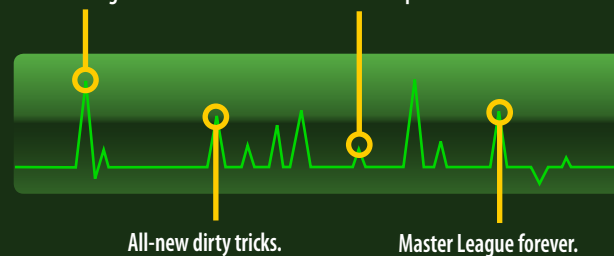
offering the exact same league and cup options that it has for the best part of a decade. As for the feted Master League, you can choose the perennial default squad, an actual club, or even build your own outfit from scratch, choosing your own name and designing your own kit.

Purists will still claim that the PS2 controller is the natural home of the game, and they do have a point, but PES 2008 undeniably occupies the upper echelons of Xbox 360 gaming. Goblin fanciers may still find it bewildering, but this is as good as sports games get. Put simply, football is the greatest sport, and PES is the greatest simulation of the greatest sport. ● **Steve Hill**

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

A hatful of goals.

No new online options.



Here he is again - the official face of PES 2008.

360Zine Verdict

Truly the beautiful game...

- It's football
- Exhilarating action
- Fictional club names

91%

PCGZine

MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE
Drop in for our review of EA's latest

BIOSHOCK REVIEW
As good on the PC as on the Xbox 360?

FALLOUT 3
The Oblivion developer returns

MMORPG SPECIAL
WoW: Lich King, Mythos & many more

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PCGZine

Issue 9 | Oct 2007

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW INSIDE!

MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE

Take to the skies with EA's latest WWII FPS

REVIEWED!

BIOSHOCK

In-depth and up-to-date review of the game

FIRST LOOK!

FALLOUT 3

Post-Apocalyptic RPG from the Oblivion team

MYTHOS

Free MMO from the brains behind WoW and Hellgate: London

RAGE

Quake meets Mad Max in id's astonishing new game

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Written by the best in the biz

ZOOM IN ZOOM OUT TOGGLE



The Orange Box

The future's bright...

So, what does forty quid's gaming money get you these days? Well, Valve believes that one game for that price isn't enough. Here, they've provided classic PC first-person shooter Half-Life 2, together with its episodic content - the previously-released Episode One, and the debuting Episode Two. Coupled with mind-bending puzzler Portal and multiplayer blaster Team Fortress 2, you've got twenty-odd hours of blisteringly brilliant shooting and puzzling, and a terrific online fragfest to round things off for the Live lovers. Amazing stuff.

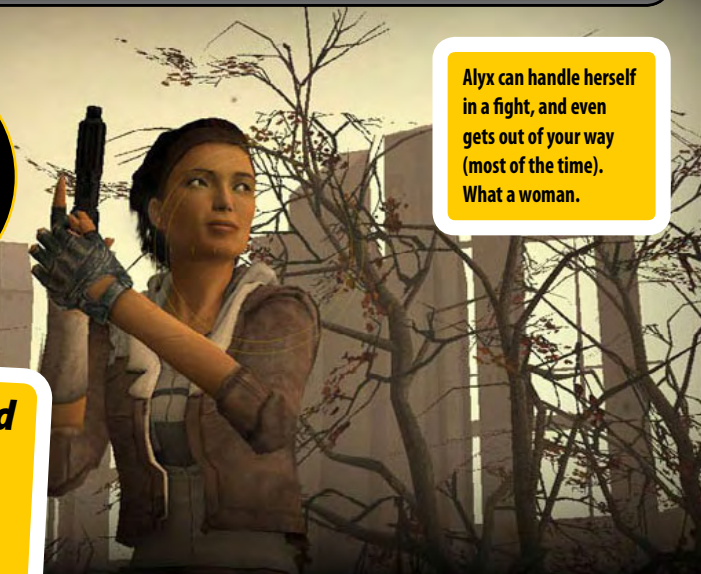
It's hard to write anything new about Half-Life 2 - suffice to say that it's

one of the most atmospheric and immersive games yet created. The attention to detail is breathtaking, as you guide scientist Gordon Freeman through a dystopian vision of Earth, in an attempt to reclaim the planet from the alien Combine forces. It's a simple story, but elegantly and intelligently told. Rather than bombard the player with non-interactive cutscenes, plot is relayed through action and brief spoken interludes - never once jumping out of the game engine into CGI, but allowing you to move around as characters speak to you. What's most memorable about Half-Life 2 is that it feels as much of an adventure as it

"You've got twenty-odd hours of blisteringly brilliant shooting and puzzling"

does a shooter - Valve show an absolute mastery of pacing, with several standout shooting sequences like the incredibly creepy, zombie-filled Ravenholm mixed in with physics-based puzzles and vehicle sections. The game might be linear, but that's to its credit - it presents one of the most convincing gameworlds you'll ever see, and guides you through it without ever holding your hand. Wonderful.

Episode One continues where Half-Life 2 left off - but this time it's a pared-down experience, restricting Gordon to his gravity gun and a couple of weaker weapons throughout. It's here where your relationship with fellow rebel fighter Alyx Vance develops - Episode One might be less awe-inspiring than some of Half-Life 2's more epic moments, but it plays up the emotional side beautifully - you genuinely feel alone and fragile when you're separated from Alyx, and it's always a relief to have you back at her side.



Alyx can handle herself in a fight, and even gets out of your way (most of the time). What a woman.

Developer: EA Games
Publisher: Valve software
Heritage: Half-Life, Counter Strike
Link: Half-Life, Counter Strike
OUT NOW

This bashed-up car provides some vehicular fun in Episode Two.



DEFINING GRAVITY

Some guns have all the fun



Gravity1



Gravity2



Gravity3



Gravity 1

Gordon's gravity gun is both enchanting toy and practical tool - here you use it to suck up mines dropped by that Combine chopper, and spit them right back out at it. It's the only way to take the thing down.

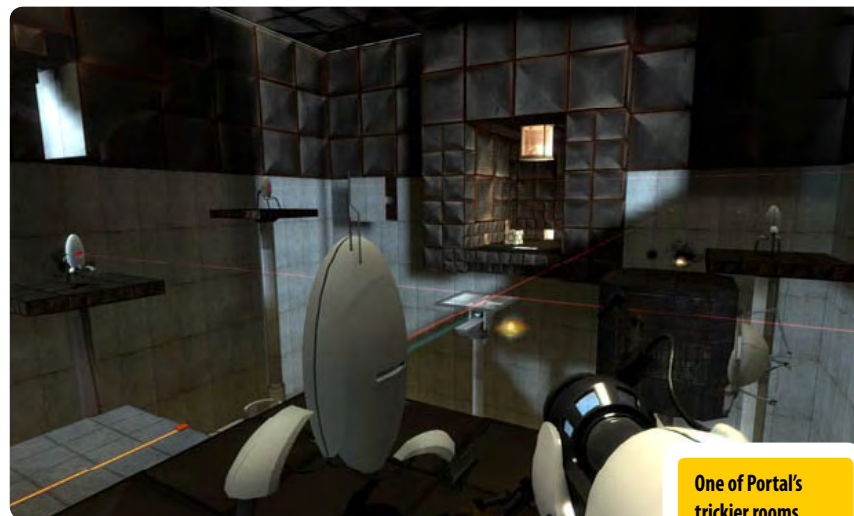


Battling the striders in Episode Two - a moment you won't forget.



Your alien compadre Vortigaunt is a brilliant help - and he's always full of praise for 'the Freeman'.

"Episode Two is five hours of absolutely mesmerising first-person shooter gameplay"



One of Portal's trickier rooms. Take just a couple of bullets from these robots and you're dead.

> Orange Box continued

She's one of gaming's most well-drawn characters, both in her amazingly-realised expressions and in her behaviour. Intelligent, spunky and hugely likeable, she's the driving force of the episodic content here - it's no spoiler to say she's with you for much of Episode Two also.

Which brings us neatly onto what's

arguably the highlight of the entire package - Episode Two is five hours of absolutely mesmerising first-person shooter gameplay, which moves away from the stripped-back, almost survival-horror feel of Episode One to a much more action-packed instalment that nevertheless manages to cram in plenty of character and story progression. The end section in particular is jaw-flooring stuff, and the

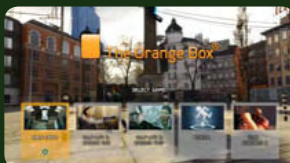
cliffhanger climax will make every single player want Episode Three right now. Remember, this is essentially a fifth of The Orange Box, and it's worth your forty notes for its sustained brilliance on its own.

Almost as good is the frontal-lobe-frazzling puzzling of Portal. Here you play a test subject in an experimental program from Aperture Science Laboratories, and use a special device



ANOTHER FINE MESA

Fun and frolics with Freeman



10 HOURS - Spoil for choice - If you're a PC owner who's played HL2 and Episode One, it's still worth every



13 HOURS - The horror - Zombies + Combine = 'Zombine'. Alyx's joke, not ours. We love her.



17 HOURS - Hunted - Get away from her you bitch! The hunters are nasty (not-so) little buggers.



21 HOURS - Twisted reality - So if I jump down here I'll end up here... Portal will fry your brain.



25+ HOURS - Behind you! - *Evil laughter*. Well...it's his fault for being near our base.

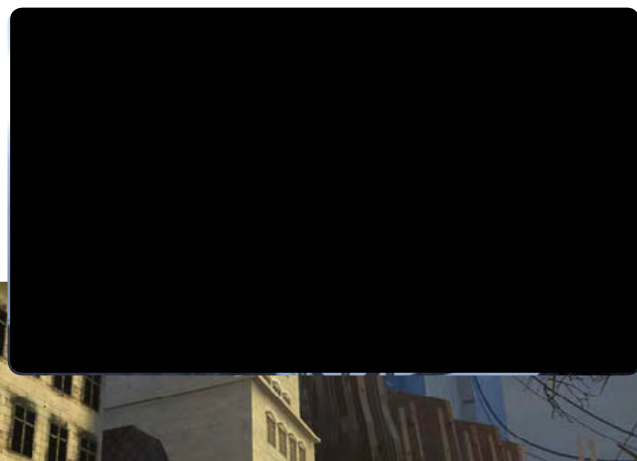


Antlions can be a real pain - though it's always fun to zap them onto their backs for Alyx to finish off.

"Portal is small, but it's quite perfectly formed"



Team Fortress 2's exceptional art style lends some (intentional) comedy to the bloodletting.



game types, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Team Fortress 2 is the afterthought of The Orange Box. You couldn't be more wrong. Its cartoony visuals belie a surprisingly tactical and deep game of multiplayer blasting that crucially never forgets to be an absolute riot of fast, furious, fragging fun. With a genuinely varied set of classes, ranging from the nippy Scout to the turret-building Engineer, TF2 is likely to keep you playing longer than any of the other games here.

Five games. Forty pounds. It's an absolute no-brainer. If you've not bought it already, pick up The Orange Box, and get yourself the best-value 360 package that money can buy. ●

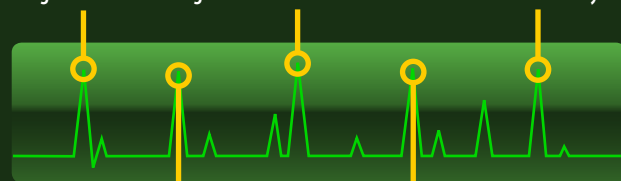
Chris Schilling

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

HL2 is rough around the edges but still amazing

Ep 2's astonishing denouement

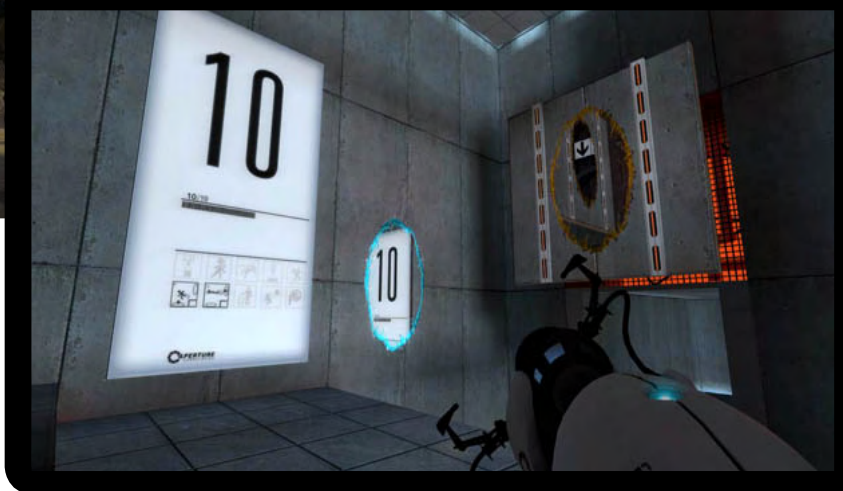
A baseball-bat kill in Team Fortress 2 - yes!



Ep 1 - you'll fall in love with Alyx

LOL at Portal's sarcastic robot instructor

The perfect 10. Well, nearly.



360Zine Verdict

The best £40 you'll EVER spend.



Some of gaming's best ever storytelling



Not a weak link in the whole package



Portal's end credits - amazing

96%

> Orange Box continued

which allows you to open up portals to pass through into different areas. The idea is to navigate a series of increasingly-complex challenges via clever use of your 'portal gun'. Step into a wall portal, and you can drop from an exit positioned in the ceiling. Fall into an entrance portal from a great height, and you'll travel the same distance

again horizontally from the wall-based exit, thanks to your momentum. Sounds complicated? Bizarrely, it's not - the game explains everything in detail (and with no small amount of wit, too) and it's not until the final few chambers - where events take a rather sinister turn - that you'll get stuck. At around three hours long, Portal is small, but it's quite perfectly formed.

With only two different team-based

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www.gamerzines.com



Developer: Sega-AM2

Publisher: Sega

Heritage: Virtua Cop series,

Virtua Tennis series,

Shenmue

Link: www.sega.com/gamesite/vf5/phase2/index.htm

OUT NOW



Eileen is the other new character, alongside El Blaze.



Virtua Fighter 5

Sega K.O. all comers with the 360's best beat-em-up

First things first - a warning. Virtua Fighter 5 is not for the casual gamer. Sure, there's an easy mode, and there are beginner level opponents, but if you fancy taking your chosen fighter online for a few feisty flurries, you're going to get your arse

handed to you time and time again. Learning the ropes of a game like Virtua Fighter 5 is a tough experience. It's a technical fighter - a world away from most other 3D beat-em-ups and requiring much more thought than even the likes of Tekken and Soul

Calibur. It's the fighter of choice for genre purists - those long hours put in at the dojo learning your character's strengths and weaknesses, and memorising those tough-to-pull-off moves... it's all worth it in the end when you get into a proper scrap - and we're not talking about namby-pamby slapfests with your mates where the person who mashes the punch and



Old man Shun might look a little frail, but he packs one hell of a punch. If you're an expert player, anyway.

"It's the fighter of choice for genre purists"

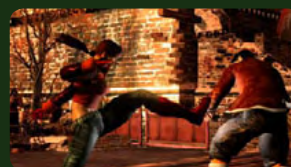
ROUND 1 Life in the ring...



1 HOUR - Learning the ropes in the Dojo, and trying out the basic Arcade mode.



3 HOURS - Getting pummeled by the AI in the later stages of Arcade, and struggling in the Quests.



6 HOURS - By now you'll have chosen your favourite fighter/s and will be using them all the time.



12 HOURS - Moving up to first Dan, and beating down AI opponents. Time to take on the world!



15+ HOURS - Your win ratio will take a hit, but now you're a practised fighter and loving the Live battles.



DOJO RISING

I know kung fu...



Battered



Getting even



Winner!



Battered

It's tempting to be put-off at first and to reduce the difficulty. Don't. Keep practising your moves in the Dojo, and testing them out on weaker opponents (those of lower Kyu in the Quest mode) - eventually you'll learn the best way to take on each rival.

> VF5 continued

kick buttons the fastest wins. No, to truly enjoy Virtua Fighter 5, you're going to have to work at it - and that makes victory in a lengthy, block-heavy match against a fellow master of this art of fighting a moment of quiet, understated triumph. You'll be bowing politely on the outside out of respect, but inwardly you'll be screaming and punching the air with the sheer joy of demonstrating that, yes, you know your stuff.

Self control

If Virtua Fighter 5 has one of the trickiest learning curves in gaming, then it's not helped at all by the Xbox 360 controller. The PS3 game might be missing the online, it might be the inferior B version of the game (though all but the most hardened VF addicts won't be able to spot the differences), but the superior d-pad on the Sixaxis and the flatter face buttons make it

"Inwardly you'll be screaming and punching the air with the sheer joy"



Jacky is another ideal beginner's choice - he's fairly quick, but not as lightweight as the likes of El Blaze.

control better on Sony's console. What you need to do is invest in an arcade stick - peripheral masters Hori have created a fighting stick specifically for VF5, and for a cool £35, you should seriously consider picking one up alongside the game if you plan on

getting the very most out of it. With the combos so reliant on precise stick movement, the analogue on the 360 controller isn't up to scratch either - some players will get by through perseverance with some of the simpler commands, but they'll soon come unstuck against the later AI opponents, or online experts. If you're committed enough to the cause, the extra cost really is a no-brainer of a decision: get the stick, and get back in the ring.

That's not to say that the game is lacking if you're a newcomer to the genre. The incredibly helpful Dojo allows you to get to grips with your character's moveset with an AI opponent who just stands there and takes the damage. Not only that, but certain fighters are easier to play with ➤

El Blaze is so clearly based on WWE wrestler Rey Mysterio it's untrue. He's absolutely tiny, though.



Fighting in leather trousers cannot be easy.



> VF5 continued

than others. Powerful Jeffry can't be juggled, so your life meter won't suffer too much from a single combo, while Rey Mysterio-alike El Blaze (one of two new characters) is a lithe wrestler whose quick punching and powerful throws can win many an early scrap on their own. If you're a little more experienced, then the rogueishly good-looking Brad Burns or ninja Kage are more appropriate, while for those who know their Jousu Senchous from their Fukko-Schichiseihos should choose Goh or Akira for true fighting mastery.

As well as your typical Arcade (with a near-unbeatable final boss, even on Easy) and Versus modes, there's an intriguing Quest mode where you challenge AI players in different virtual arcades - it's like you're playing a game

within a game. Here's where you can earn new costumes and logos for your chosen scrapper - giving your character a more personal touch. You start off at a lowly 10th Kyu, and it'll take multiple fights before you start to progress up the rankings towards the more experienced Dans.

Design for life

Being a Sega game, the presentation is typically smooth. The graphics are technically impressive if unspectacular, but the design is utterly superb, with some gorgeous backgrounds, particularly on the Great Wall and Island stages. The fighters are handsomely drawn too, though it's disappointing to see a lack of smoothness in some of the animations. One of the series' strengths is its fluidity, and it's essential so that experienced fighters can see



The backgrounds are archetypal Sega riots of colour. It's just a shame you don't have more time to drink them in.

where their opponent's next attack is coming from. Perhaps it's a case of adjusting to a slightly faster pace than Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution, but attacks seem harder to read this time around.

Despite this, and the controller issues, Virtua Fighter 5 is a must-have arcade experience on the 360. The simple ability to fight online means this trumps the PlayStation 3 version, and if you've got a compatible arcade stick already, then it's even better value. Just remember, if you're finding the going a little tough that practice really does make perfect. ●

Chris Schilling



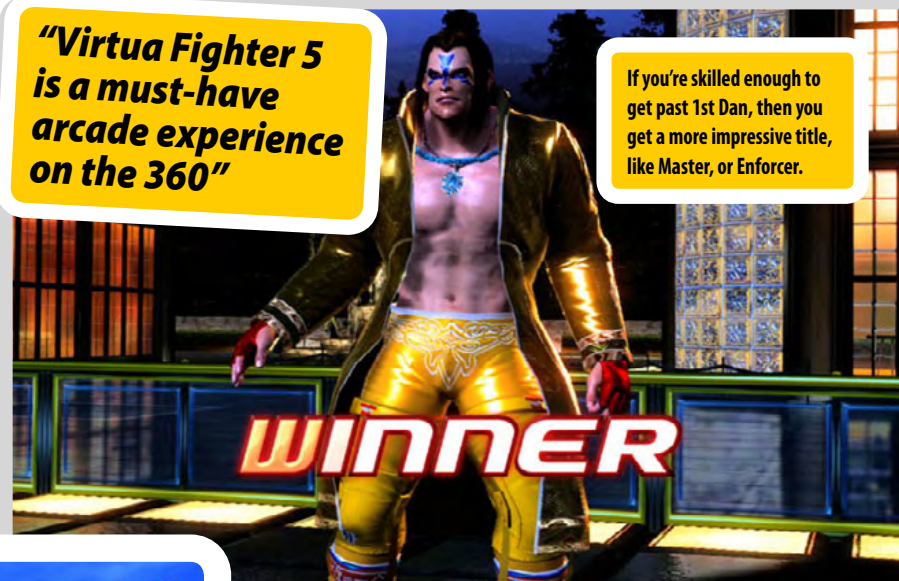
Grabs and throws can be tricky to pull off - especially against the more mobile opponents.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



"Virtua Fighter 5 is a must-have arcade experience on the 360"

If you're skilled enough to get past 1st Dan, then you get a more impressive title, like Master, or Enforcer.



360Zine Verdict *Virtually the best fighter ever*

- 👍 A treat for the eyes
- 👍 Oh so rewarding when you master it
- 👎 Lacking controls

88%

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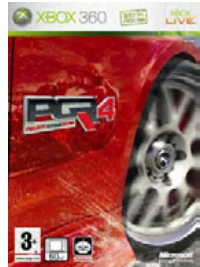
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Developer: Bizarre
Creations

Publisher: Microsoft Game
Studios

Heritage: Metropolis Street
Racer, PGR series

Link: www.pgrnations.com
OUT NOW

Project Gotham Racing 4

Kudos to Bizarre for the best racer on 360

It's become a bit of a running joke to suggest that if you're releasing a game for the Xbox 360 that's not a first-person shooter, then it must be a racing game. Of course that's far from the truth, but that would be to ignore that the above comment is merely an exaggeration for comedic effect - there are tons of racers on the console, and it takes something special to really stand out from the crowd. Aside from having to best their previous PGR title - a whopping hit at 360's launch, Bizarre Creations had the tricky proposition of competing with the more sim-like Forza Motorsport 2, itself rather popular among gaming motorphiles.



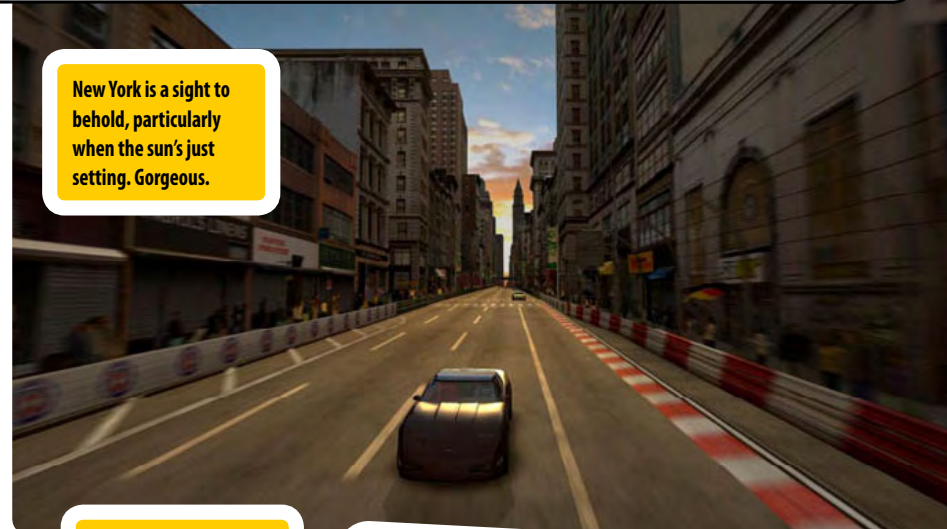
Amazingly, not only has Bizarre trumped both games, but done it with some room (and class) to spare.

Powerslides

The beauty of PGR4 is that it's a charismatic game. For what's ostensibly a pretty straight racing game, that's some achievement. But this time round, Gotham's handling errs on the



arcadey side. It's a bold move that really pays off, creating some distance between this and Forza, and focusing on the driving and - yes - the kudos. "Speed is nothing without style" boasts the blurb, and it's a telling hint as to how Bizarre want you to play the game. It's all very well racing fairly clinically - slowing down at each corner, swinging out then in before pressing the throttle - but PGR4 wants you to powerslide your back end round those tricky



New York is a sight to behold, particularly when the sun's just setting. Gorgeous.

Some of the in-car views are utterly dazzling. It's a real showcase for your 360.

"Speed is nothing without style"



St. Petersburg with a sepia sheen - bike races are infrequent if you're not comfortable on two wheels.

IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME
Tick tock goes the clock...



1 HOUR - Yep, one hour into Career Mode, and you're on the Nurburgring in the snow. Eek!



4 HOURS - Taking in the sights at the MGM Grand and the Bellagio in Vegas. Lush.



6 HOURS - Puttin' on ya best Noo Yoik accent to cross da Brooklyn Bridge.



10 HOURS - Moving up the classes with a tough-to-handle Enzo in Tokyo.



15 HOURS - Giving it your best shot as you share your stunning photos online.

EVERYWHERE YOU GO

You always take the weather with you



Snow



Rain



Sunny



Snow problem

Take in the Tourist Twist around London and you'll get to see some of the most popular landmarks. Big Ben looks great in the snow, particularly if you're pulling a massive endo as you pass...

> PGR4 continued

chicanes, before squealing the tyres into a burnout as you motor down the straight. If you're finding the drifting a little tricky, then you'll still rack up a few points for a well-taken bend, but it's nothing compared to screeching round a snowy Nurburgring in one of the Career Mode's early challenges. Events are now more varied than ever before, ranging from setting hot laps to racking up kudos points, though PGR4's at its best in a straight-out street race -

on or offline.

Other than the more accessible handling model - oh, and the dynamic weather - the one other big, BIG change is the addition of bikes. For some internet goers, this seems tantamount to sticking Sonic in a Mario game, but like the blue 'hog, your Suzukis and Hondas are a most welcome addition - their handling will initially seem twitchy to those who subscribe to the 'four wheels good' way of thinking, but some newcomers will actually find the ability to lean into



Wheelies get you bags of Kudos - pick a track with a really long straight (like the Vegas strip) and you'll rack up the points in no time!

"The 360's best racer and yet another must-have"

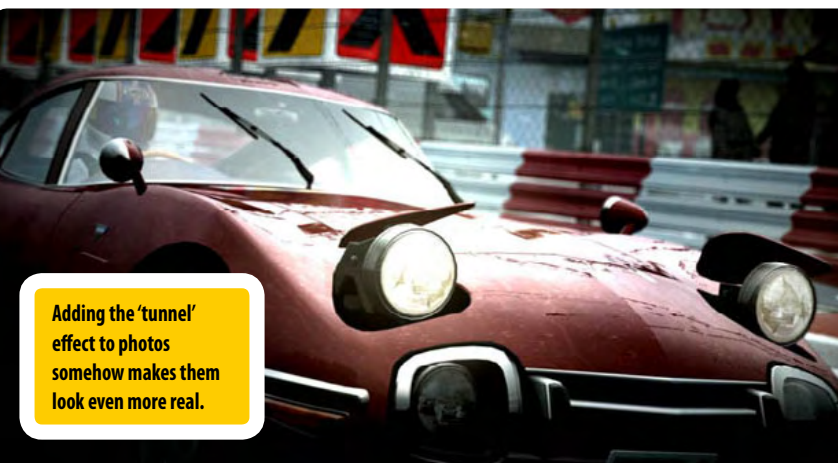


There's a nice range of cars, from top-of-the-range sports cars of today, to classics from yesteryear.

corners makes the game even more accessible. And you can do massive wheelies and endos with them - perfect for the show-offs among you. Are they overpowered? Perhaps slightly, but then you can get your revenge by bashing them off the tracks with the business end of your Aston Martin.

With an astounding number of modes and challenges, a vastly improved front end, and graphics more eye-popping than a nude Kelly Brook, PGR4 is Bizarre's crowning glory. It's also the 360's best racer and yet another must-have for a console already awash with classics. That credit card's just going to have to take one more hit, we're afraid... ● **Chris Schilling**

Not all has gone to plan.



Adding the 'tunnel' effect to photos somehow makes them look even more real.

360Zine Verdict

Holy Kudos, Batman!
Gotham's the only place to race

- Stylish racing in stunning settings
- Handling tweaked to near-perfection
- Soundtrack's a bit iffy

92%

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Developer: Koei

Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Heritage: Dynasty Warriors

Link: www.

dynastywarriorsgundam.

com

OUT NOW

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam

Beat up robots for fun and profit, well, sort of...

The Dynasty Warriors series has a simple premise: you are on a battlefield filled with enemies and you are stupidly tough. It's a kind of wide-open beat 'em up, where 90% of the goons you encounter are too fragile to withstand a flutter of your eyelash. You, and perhaps some AI-controlled chums, go plunging through the hordes of enemies, putting them down a dozen at a time. Eventually you'll run into a boss character who, in some way that the stories never quite

make clear, has more hitpoints and a bigger attitude than everyone else. If you're really lucky he'll even be able to fight back.

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam takes this familiar and popular formula and applies it to telling the tale of the battles from the Anime Gundam series, specifically the 'Universal Century' timeline, which is the original chronology in which the mecha series established itself. Space exploration, robot warfare and men with long



Special powers can be released every couple of minutes for efficient annihilations.



It's all hack and slash. Except when you're shooting. But who wants to shoot?



A TALE OF TWO ROBOTS

Whichever character you choose to be, a whole lot of robots are gonna be going /down/.



The game begins with an assault on enemy positions on some desert planet. Lots of lost-looking brown robots get a right kicking.



The baddies arrive in waves and you unlock zones by either killing them all or defeat the appropriate boss character.



As your character and robot level up you gain in powers. Your sword remains the most effective weapon throughout, however.



Some of the baddies are marginally tougher - they're sort of pre-boss bosses. Needless to say, you give them a proper pasting.



The end game features - you guessed it - loads of robots. If you get this far you can expect to have spectacular special moves.

> **Gundam** continued

chins dominate the tale, and the same is true of Dynasty Warriors: Gundam, which ambles along with its tale of evil enemies and bearded generals as if anyone were paying attention to such things. There's plenty of cackling enemies and weird dialogue between the characters, often making reference to the kind of illogical reasoning and bizarre metaphors that are derived from poor translation from Japanese. It's authentic Gundam, indeed, but not

ROBOTOLGY 101

Praying to Mecha five times a day

**Cutscenes****Robots****Bosses****Cutscenes**

In reality the game seldom actually bothers to look this pretty. The prettiest bits are always freeze-framed cutscenes that take place between the actual robot-fighting parts of the game.



"There's plenty of cackling enemies and weird dialogue"

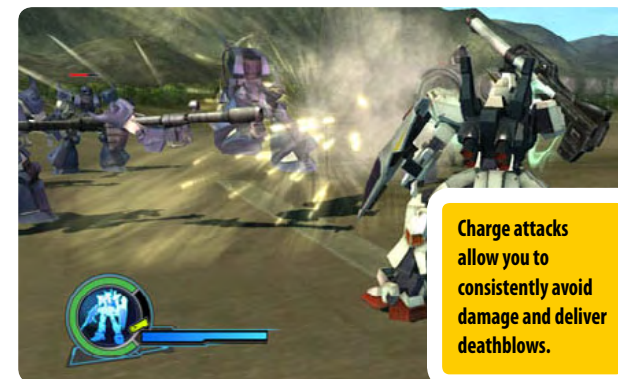
all that carefully delivered.

What really matters, of course, is the fighting itself. The pace is slow to begin with, but it does manage to get up to speed after a few levels. This is thanks to the levelling RPG structure of the game - both your character and his suit gain levels, and as you develop the character the better equipped you become to mow down the legions of enemy mecha that face you. It's staggeringly repetitive, however, with remarkably few challenges aside from those provided by beating the regular flow of bosses that your robo-friends

encounter.

It's also remarkably ugly. With this new generation of consoles we've come to expect not just a certain level of visual intricacy, but also a level of clever physics and particle fireworks that bolsters any kind of fighting action. Gundam just doesn't have it. Part of this is, perhaps, thanks to the absurd number of enemies on the field, but even this doesn't excuse it. You only have to look at its contemporary, Bladestorm, to see how much more impressive this kind of game can be on a Next Generation console.

Ultimately, then, this is a disappointing outing for Gundam and for Dynasty Warriors. If you're looking for mass brawling or robot action then this might satisfying for a few brief moments, but there's much better to be had out there. ● **Jim Rossignol**

**360Zine Verdict**

Gundam meets Dynasty Warriors and spawns a rather ugly, unhappy child.

👍 Robots!

👎 Lacking feedback

👎 Oh my repetition!

69%

HGZine PSP & DS games

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The cover of HGZine Issue 9, October 2007, features a large image of a soldier from Call of Duty 4. The magazine title 'HGZine' is prominently displayed in red. A yellow starburst graphic on the left says 'FREE! Handheld Gamer Magazine'. A banner at the top right says 'CLICK HERE TO SHARE THIS MAGAZINE'. The main headline reads 'IT'S WAR! CALL OF DUTY The legendary series is coming to Nintendo DS!'. Other featured games include 'Sonic Rush Adventure' (DS), 'Wipeout Pulse' (PSP), 'Sonic Rivals 2' (PSP), 'Race Driver' (DS), and 'FIFA 08' (DS). A yellow starburst on the right contains the HGZine logo and the text: 'Completely free of charge', 'Passionate about videogames', 'Dedicated to handheld', 'Written by the best in the biz'. At the bottom, navigation links include 'SEARCH 360Zine?', 'PRINT THIS PAGE', 'ZOOM IN', 'ZOOM OUT', 'TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW', 'PREVIOUS PAGE', and 'NEXT PAGE'.



Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

Weird, kooky and downright addictive, this month's XBLA games come in all shapes and sizes



Fancy space battles abound, but no vertical movement?

Battlestar Galactica

Developer: Auran Publisher: Sierra Online Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Fans of the series have been crying out for a video game tie-in for years, but we doubt this is quite what they had in mind. Playing almost exactly the same as Wing Commander, just with different ships, you get to pilot various craft from the TV series, in a colossal war against the evil Cylons. However, where Wing Commander was rubbish because it didn't feature a single-player mode, Battlestar Galactica has both a fully featured single player, and an 8 player

online multiplayer mode. While the flight mechanics could be a lot better (your ships feel more like cars than spacecraft), and the lack of vertical movement harms the appeal, this is a lot better than Wing Commander.

- Single-player!
- Good online
- Single-player!

You're the Battle Star!

74%

Tetris Splash

Developer: Tetris Online, Inc Publisher: Tetris Online, Inc Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

For the past decade or so, we've waited patiently to be treated to just a normal, standard version of Tetris. Not one where you have to squish monkeys with the tetrominoes. Not one where there's a storyline, and you have to save the world. Just a normal, common or garden, Tetris experience. Thankfully, Tetris Splash is just that. The one gimmick the game has is that it takes place underwater, which simply results in your pieces leaving trails of bubbles behind them as they plunge to the bottom of your grid.



- It's Tetris
- No cheap gimmicks
- Online play

Normal Tetris! Hooray!

80%



E4

Developer: Q Entertainment Publisher: Q Entertainment Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

E4, or Every Extend Extra Extreme, is a trippy music-driven shooting game, that's incredibly easy to play. As enemy "ships" begin to fill the screen, you have to pilot your craft into the middle of the bunch, detonating at just the right time to take out as many as you can. And that's it. As each ship explodes, it gives off a beat, letting you make funky music as you blow up the enemy. With high-scores that run into trillions, you can waste so much time on this, it's almost scary – recommended if you need something to wind down with.

- Psychedelic
- Import your own music!
- Too simplistic

Extreme doesn't describe it

75%

Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords

Developer: Infinite Interactive Publisher: D3Publisher of Europe Price: 1200 MP (~£10.20)

A puzzle game-cum-RPG, the main part of the game takes place on a world map, with you moving your character from town to town, furthering the storyline and accumulating quests, which mostly involve doing battle with something. By matching certain colours you'll gain different types of mana, which allow you to cast spells on your enemy, until they are defeated.



- Interesting battles
- Decent story mode
- A bit too expensive

Challenge accepted

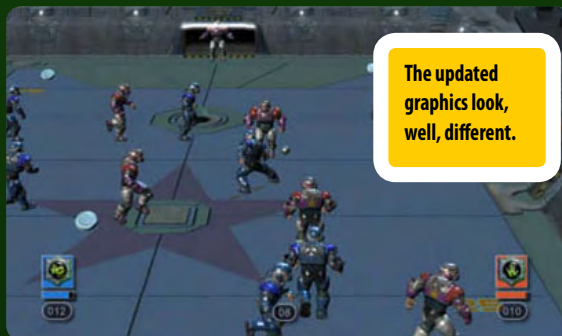
78%

> Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up continued

Speedball 2

Developer: The Bitmap Brothers Publisher: Empire Interactive
Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

The fact that this is an updated version of the Bitmap Brothers' classic from the 1990s may be enough to generate some interest. At least, until you realise they've ruined it. While the basic game remains the same – an ultra violent cross between rugby and football – and the graphical update certainly gives the game a much needed sheen, there's a lot to be said for the gameplay. When your players have a habit for getting stuck on the spot, just waiting to be tackled by someone, you start to realise that this classic has been butchered. Yet still, the game retains its addictive charm...



The updated graphics look, well, different.

- Still addictive
- It's Speedball, dammit
- Too Glitchy

It's our bad habit 57%

Yaris

Developer: Backbone Entertainment Publisher: Microsoft Price: Free!

If you have a US Xbox Live account, you can download this promotional game from the XBLA for free. However, before you rush to your 360, you should really read the rest of this, as Yaris really isn't worth the space it'll take up on your hard drive. The whole concept of the game is to drive your Toyota Yaris (which you can choose in a variety of real life colours) around a track, collecting coins and... shooting enemies with the giant tentacle that protrudes from your bonnet. Surely that counts as false advertising? With no split-screen multiplayer, and some awful handling there's even less of a reason to play this – it's really not worth your time, even if it is free.

Yep, those are fat blokes on motorbikes.



- You can drive a Yaris
- But it's awful
- Stupid tentacle things

Any promotion is good, right? 31%



The 220 levels will take you forever to complete, but you're still only getting half the game for your money...

Exit

Developer: Taito Publisher: Taito Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

An updated version of a kooky PSP game, Exit is one of the strangest platformers we've played. Playing as Mr.ESC, it's up to you to rescue people from a building, guiding them safely to the exit, avoiding all manner of obstacles on your way. Unfortunately, however, the controls are nowhere near as tight as they should be. After touching an evacuee to make them follow you, you can give orders to them using a cursor that's moved by your right analogue stick. It's an awkward way of doing things, and is neither responsive, nor as intuitive as it

needs to be. To make matters worse, you're only actually getting half the game for your money – on the level select screen, half are still greyed out, even though you've bought the game. Although you do get 220 levels for your money, it's another XBLA game that thinks it can pinch more money out of people by withholding levels.

- Good idea
- Irresponsive controls
- Half the game costs extra

Too much DLC 61%

HD-DVD reviews

The latest and greatest new releases...



Transformers

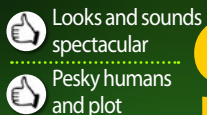
Publisher: Paramount Home Video **Extras:** Director's Commentary, HD Connect, Head's Up display, Transformers Tech Inspector, making-of videos

The dreams of any boy who grew up in the 80s has finally been fulfilled. The plot is threadbare and often illogical, the human characters nearly extraneous, and the movie is too long. Yet, for that, who cares? The reason to sit through the crap is the robots, and they look incredible... and completely real. The HD-DVD transfer is stunning, the audio house shaking, and there's a commendable amount of extras to round out an excellent package.



360Zine Verdict

Stupid, and yet amazing.



92%



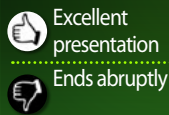
Next

Publisher: Paramount Home Video **Extras:** Making of videos, trailer

Nicolas Cage is Frank Cadillac, a small-time Vegas magician who can see two minutes into his own future, leading to a plot about nuking LA and, on a more personal note, bagging the stunning Jessica Biel. The story certainly isn't as tight as, say, Déjà vu, but the pace is excellent and the way the movie shows off Cadillac's abilities is fantastic. The movie also looks great on HD, and this one is definitely worth at least a rental.

360Zine Verdict

A fun and visually engaging tale of sci-fi paranoia



85%



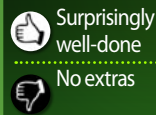
Top Gun

Publisher: Paramount Home Video **Extras:** No special features

Much like the 80s in general, Top Gun is, despite its success, a shallow, empty, and clichéd experience bloated on its own sense of self-importance. It may have rocketed Tom Cruise's career into the stratosphere of its current weirdness, but after 20 years it's amazing to see just how bad a movie it is. That said, the actual aerial sequences are still great, and the HD transfer is generally exceptionally good. Strangely, the disc has no extras whatsoever.

360Zine Verdict

Thank god the 80s are over.



65%



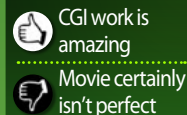
TMNT

Publisher: Warner Home Video **Extras:** Writer/director commentary, alternate opening and ending, deleted scene, storyboard comparisons, voice actor interviews

If you don't mind the basic concept of mutated ninja turtles, then you're probably open to the idea of enjoying the CGI outing of the brothers green. The plot drags too often, but the action scenes look excellent, and the actual CGI work is simply amazing. The movie thrives on HD as well, with a flawlessly crisp picture and great audio.

360Zine Verdict

Surprisingly well-done cartoonish fun



80%



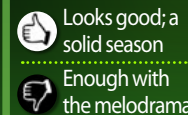
Smallville Season 6

Publisher: Warner Home Video **Extras:** Green Arrow: Legend of Emerald Archer, unaired scenes, Smallville Legends shorts

If you've stuck with Smallville this long, then it's safe to say you've overlooked the shows overt bouts of teen melodrama and at times absurd deviations from the Superman mythos. Taken at face value, however, even with all the teen angst, it's a great looking show that generally provides more topnotch comic book action than anything else on TV - especially this season thanks to the rudimentary introduction of the Justice League.

360Zine Verdict

More small screen drama and superhero goodness



85%

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Homer's belches can flatten people.



"It's been really, really challenging to nail this thing on the head"



Homer's superpower is turning into Homerball.



Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 2 co-op
Features: 16 levels, character-based superpowers, voice acting
Heritage: Medal Of Honor, Tiger Woods
ETA: November 2

Another episode reference as Bart and Lisa take on the dolphins.



The Simpsons Game

We caught up with game designer Greg Rizzer to discuss Springfield's finest...



GREG RIZZER

One of the few game designers to make the move from PR into development, Greg was responsible for hawking online goblin-fest EverQuest, followed by an extended spell working for Eidos. Since joining EA, he has worked on 007: Everything Or Nothing and The Godfather: The Game.

Nothing to do with the recent movie, The Simpsons Game sees the titular yellow family knowingly licensed into a videogame...

So you're drawing from videogames, you're drawing from the show, and it's all very self-referential. One episode of The Simpsons is an incredibly complex thing. How do you start with 16 interactive levels?

It's been really, really challenging to nail this thing on the head. There's just been thousands of ideas that have come and gone to finally be able to bring it down into focus, decide which ones we're going to use and then within each of those episodes to try to get as much videogame parody in there and as many show references. A great example is when we were making Lisa's power-up we said "What would she be?" And then we go back to the

show and there was a Halloween episode where Lisa became Clobber Girl.

So for The Simpsons fanatic it's ticking the boxes?

Even when the aliens invade Springfield they come back with a board and a nail, a reference to the episode when Mo chased them out of Springfield with a board and a nail. And people may not even notice that, but then one of the guys in a focus group said "I love the bit where the aliens came back with the board and the nail," and I looked over to my creative director and went, "He gets it."

So is there some original stuff in there as well or is it all drawn from the show?

There's a really big list of original characters that were created just for the game, I think we have 180 different

characters in the game and a hundred are from the show and 80 are unique creations. We designed things like using Comic Book Guy as a sumo, and immediately the writers of the show were just like "Fine, perfect." It was cool because I think they could see that we really know the characters and they trusted us in a lot of ways and they had so much to contribute as far as their videogame knowledge as well. ●

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